

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SPACE SCIENCE BOARD

September 24, 1959

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
Stanford, California

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am writing in response to your letter of September 17. We have already proposed to COSPAR a session along the lines that you have suggested, embracing contamination problems and extraterrestrial life. Independently, something of the same proposal was made to COSPAR by Dr. Peter Alexander.

I would hope that you can plan at least tentatively to participate personally in the symposium with one or two papers on these problems. Meanwhile, I hope to receive some further information from Van de Hulst as well as to pursue the matter in somewhat more detail in another letter that will get off in a day or two. We should therefore soon be in a better position, on the basis of Van de Hulst's plans, to develop our contributions.

We have no information, other than the statement in The New York Times asserting that some decontamination procedures were pursued, with respect to the recent Soviet moon rocket sterilization. I am addressing the Soviet Academy on this topic and perhaps we may have something further one of these days.

Sincerely yours,


Hugh Odishaw
Executive Director